

# PLYMOUTH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2011

TOWN HALL MAYFLOWER ROOM

The Selectmen held a meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall in the Mayflower Room.

Present: William P. Hallisey, Jr., Chairman  
John T. Mahoney, Jr., Vice Chairman [Arrived at 5:15 p.m.]  
Richard J. Quintal, Jr. [Arrived at 7:00 p.m.]  
Sergio O. Harnais  
Mathew J. Muratore

Mark Stankiewicz, Town Manager  
Melissa Arrighi, Assistant Town Manager

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hallisey called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

## **LICENSES**

### **PEDI-CAB PERMIT (NEW)**

On a motion by Selectman Muratore, seconded by Selectman Harnais, the Board voted to grant the following Pedi-Cab licenses, as detailed. Voted 3-0-0, approved.

#### ❖ **Plymouth Pedicab**, (4 Freedom St. Plymouth., Michael Tubin)

- One Pedi-cab Business Operating Permit
- Three Pedi-cab Vehicle Permits (Serial number BM 128, BM 129, BM 130)  
All Vehicles have been inspected
- One Pedi-cab Operator: Noah Luszcz, (11 Eagle Drive, Plymouth)  
Issuance of the above license is subject to review of the requisite CORI Background Check

### **VEHICLE FOR HIRE OPERATOR (NEW)**

On a motion by Selectman Muratore, seconded by Selectman Harnais, the Board voted to grant the following Vehicle for Hire Operator License, as detailed. Voted 3-0-0, approved.

#### ❖ **For Habilitation Assistance**, (424 Court Street, Plymouth)

- Sean Fernando (66 Spooner Street, Plymouth)  
Issuance of the above license is subject to review of the requisite CORI Background Check.

On a motion by Selectman Muratore, seconded by Selectman Harnais, the Board voted to grant the following Vehicle for Hire Operator License, as detailed. Voted 3-0-0, approved.

❖ **For Total Travelers Transportation, (844 Webster Street, Marshfield)**

- Walter Tryon, Jr. (40 Martingale Lane, Plymouth)

Issuance of the above license is subject to review of the requisite CORI Background Check.

## **GOAL SETTING**

At this time, Vice Chairman Mahoney arrived and joined the meeting (5:15 p.m.).

The Board discussed two prepared handouts (one prepared by Selectmen Harnais) listing different possible goals for the Town and Town Manager. They talked about having a focus on service delivery and getting ‘back to the basics’ in terms of providing service to the public, particularly in Public Works. In addition, the Board spoke about goals and objectives for all departments and staff, as well as salary levels for Department Heads (in terms of retention).

The Selectmen discussed the need for the Town to be more development-friendly and make the permitting process less cumbersome. They requested that another goal-setting session be scheduled in the future, and they asked Town Manager Mark Stankiewicz to review all of the goals listed and write a report on his outlook and recommendations, based on the conversation during this meeting of May 10, 2011. Selectman Muratore made the suggestion that, in his report, Mr. Stankiewicz merge the information provided in the handouts with the departmental goals and his personal goals, along with comments on how the various goals (Selectmen, Town Manager, departmental) align with the Town’s budget.

On a motion by Vice Chairman Mahoney, seconded by Selectman Muratore, the Board voted to break at 6:00 p.m. and reconvene at Plymouth North High School at 7:00 p.m. for the Public Forum on Nuclear Power. Voted 4-0-0, approved.

## **FORUM ON NUCLEAR POWER – PLYMOUTH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL**

Chairman Hallisey reconvened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Plymouth North High School. Prior to the start of the forum, Chairman Hallisey led the Pledge of Allegiance for the panel participants and audience of (approximately) 150 citizens.

Chairman Hallisey then introduced each panel participant:

Therese Murray	Senate President
Vinny deMacedo	State Representative
Thomas Calter	State Representative
William P. Hallisey, Jr.	Plymouth Board of Selectmen – Chairman
John T. Mahoney, Jr.	Plymouth Board of Selectmen – Vice Chairman
Richard J. Quintal, Jr.	Plymouth Board of Selectmen

Sergio O. Harnais	Plymouth Board of Selectmen
Mathew J. Muratore	Plymouth Board of Selectmen
Mark Stankiewicz	Plymouth Town Manager
Jeff Berger	Plymouth Nuclear Matters Committee – Chairman
Richard Grassie	Plymouth Nuclear Matters Committee
Richard Rothstein	Plymouth Nuclear Matters Committee
Paul Smith	Plymouth Nuclear Matters Committee
Jack Alexander	Entergy – Manager of Governmental Affairs
Steve Bethay	Entergy – Director of Safety & Compliance
Vin Fallacara	Entergy – Director of Engineering
Dave Noyes	Entergy – Operations Manager
Bob Smith	Entergy – Vice President of Operations

Chairman Hallisey explained that the Board of Selectmen received questions in advance of the forum regarding the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (“Pilgrim”) from the following individuals and three groups/organizations:

Janet Alfieri	Plymouth
Anna Baker	
Jerrine Egloff	Plymouth
Marie Fehlow, former member of the Nuclear Matters Committee	Plymouth
Jay Ferguson	Plymouth
Donald A. Garrepy	Hampton, NH
Manny & Gloria Horvitz	Plymouth
Bojan Jennings	Plymouth
Robert M. Keller, former Chief, Operator Licensing Section, U.S. NRC	
Joan LaRowe	Plymouth
Eleanor G. Massie	Plymouth
Nancy McSpadden	Plymouth
Fay K. Meltzer	Plymouth
Dr. Richard H. Nealey	Plymouth
John Nichols	East Orleans
Edward Russell	Plymouth
Pilgrim Watch, Mary Lampert (Director)	Duxbury
Plymouth Nuclear Matters Committee	Plymouth
Plymouth Area League of Women Voters	Plymouth

Chairman Hallisey noted that a good majority of the questions that the Board received centered on the safety and fate of the spent fuel at Pilgrim Station, regardless of whether or not Pilgrim’s license is renewed. Many, he said, expressed concern about the ability of Pilgrim Station (through structural design components and operational safeguards) to withstand a natural disaster similar to that which occurred in Japan, causing catastrophic events at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. Other concerns centered on emergency and evacuation planning. Due to the volume of questions posed, Chairman Hallisey explained, questions were sorted and compiled by content, to avoid redundancy and repetition.

As Chairman Hallisey began to read the first question, Jack Alexander (Manager of Governmental Affairs for Entergy) asked that the Board allow Entergy officials to provide a presentation for the panel and audience. Seeing no objections from the Board, Chairman Hallisey accommodated the request.

Steve Bethay (Director of Safety & Compliance for Entergy) commenced Entergy's presentation with a detailed explanation of what nuclear experts believe happened at Japan's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant following the earthquake and tsunami events in March. With the use of an overhead PowerPoint display, Mr. Bethay and Vin Fallacara (Director of Engineering for Entergy) illustrated the presumed events at Fukushima and provided information as to why Entergy officials believe that Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station is unlikely to experience an earthquake and/or tsunami of such magnitude as that which occurred in Japan. Mr. Fallacara pointed out that Entergy has emergency generators in place to prepare for any catastrophic event that might cause a full loss of power at the facility.

Mr. Bethay discussed the issue of spent fuel rods that have accumulated in the storage pool at the facility. Should a catastrophic loss of power affect Entergy's ability to pump water into the storage pool, Mr. Bethay indicated, it would take approximately two weeks for the water to boil down to the point where the fuel would be exposed. Entergy, he said, has a number of independently-powered pumps to prevent such exposure.

Bob Smith (Entergy's Vice President of Operations) talked about the 650 highly-trained employees who are responsible for the safety and security of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station. Entergy's workforce, he said, has an excellent recognition rating within the nuclear power generation industry.

At the close of the presentation, Vice Chairman Mahoney inquired if Entergy officials would take questions from the audience. Chairman Hallisey explained that he asked citizens to submit their questions in advance of the meeting to ensure that Entergy would be prepared to provide complete answers.

Chairman Hallisey posed the questions under each category and allowed Entergy representatives the opportunity to respond.

## **QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SPENT FUEL POOL**

- *What is the capacity within the storage pool for spent fuel?*
- *What are Entergy's plans for short-term and long-term storage of the spent nuclear fuel at Pilgrim Station (including dry cask storage)?*
- *Are there any plans to move the spent fuel off-site? Where? When?*

Mr. Alexander responded that Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station is currently licensed to store a maximum of 3,859 fuel assemblies in its cooling pool. Based on the number of fuel rods currently stored in the pool (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the permitted capacity), Pilgrim can continue to operate until 2014, he noted. Mr. Alexander stated that, until the federal government

fulfills its obligation to assume stewardship of the spent fuel at a centralized storage facility (i.e. Yucca Mountain in Nevada), Entergy must begin the process of moving Pilgrim's spent fuel into dry cask storage on-site—a process that Entergy has already initiated, so that transfer of the fuel may commence in 2014.

## **RELICENSING**

- *If the Nuclear Regulatory Commission does not renew Pilgrim's license and the facility is decommissioned, who will be responsible—from an operational and financial standpoint—for the care and security of the spent fuel that remains in Plymouth?*
- *Would Entergy allow an independent agency, such as the National Academy of Science, to conduct inspections to assess the safety and security of all existing plants before relicensing is considered?*

Mr. Alexander affirmed that Entergy, as the license holder for Pilgrim, would be responsible for the operational and security aspects of maintaining the spent fuel at the site, following the decommissioning of the power station. There is a decommissioning fund from which the expense to maintain and protect the spent fuel can be drawn, he noted.

Mr. Smith stated that Entergy would not entertain safety assessments and inspections to be conducted by independent scientific groups, as the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission ("NRC") and Atomic Safety Licensing Board ("ASLB") already perform such oversight.

## **DESIGN / OPERATIONAL STANDARDS**

- *How does Entergy monitor and detect contaminants in the groundwater, air, and seawater around Pilgrim?*
- *How can Entergy accurately predict and directly monitor the wind patterns, in the event of an air-borne radioactive release? Will additional real-time meteorological stations help, and were any lessons learned from the Fukushima event?*
- *How does Pilgrim compare in performance to other nuclear power stations?*
- *Has Entergy made enhancements at Pilgrim Station as a result of previous industry events? What repairs or upgrades have been made to Pilgrim's infrastructure (i.e. structural, electrical, and plumbing systems) that will ensure the plant's viability for another 20 years? How often are you required to inspect and test these systems?*

Mr. Bethay reported that Entergy monitors all releases of radioactive material—gaseous or liquid—into the environment before they leave the facility. Test results are summarized in annual radiological reports that are published each May, he noted, and detectable releases have consistently been small fractions of the allowable limits. Mr. Bethay explained that Entergy routinely monitors the quality of air, groundwater, seawater (including fish, clams, and seaweed), soil, and crops in the areas surrounding the power station via the installation of

air sampling equipment, groundwater-monitoring wells, dosimeters, and test areas in various locations. Test results, he said, are reported to the NRC each year.

With regard to wind monitoring, Mr. Bethay said, Entergy works collaboratively with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (“MEMA”) and Department of Public Health (“DPH”) in the event of an airborne release of radioactive material into the air. Mr. Bethay explained that Entergy would use a combination of meteorological computer modeling with on-the-ground tracking within the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (“EPZ”) to determine the direction of a radioactive plume, should a release occur.

Mr. Bethay noted that Entergy is evaluated and rated by the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations every two years and is considered to be among the best within the nuclear power generation industry.

Jeff Berger, chairman of the Nuclear Matters Committee (“NMC”), interjected to state that he and his fellow committee members have had concerns for several years that Entergy does not appear to have real-time monitoring equipment to ascertain the direction of a radioactive plume.

Rich Rothstein (member of the NMC) noted that, when he worked within the nuclear utility industry, there was concern that the NRC did not set forth sufficient requirements to adequately address the complex wind patterns of power stations like Pilgrim. Mr. Rothstein said that he does not fault Entergy officials for meeting the standards set forth by the NRC; rather, it is the NRC who is at fault for neglecting to mandate auxiliary and offsite real-time monitoring.

Returning to the questions posed by Chairman Hallisey, Mr. Bethay reported that Entergy has invested over \$300 million towards several upgrades to its Pilgrim facility during its twelve years of ownership, from new pumps, valves, and generators to computer systems and test equipment. It is in Entergy’s best interest to ensure the facility’s safety and future viability, Mr. Bethay said, and, thus, regular tests are conducted on equipment at a frequency relative to the integrity of the components being evaluated.

## **SAFETY AND EVACUATION**

- *Can Pilgrim withstand a major earthquake, hurricane, or tsunami?*
- *In the event of power loss, what measures are in place to ensure that water continues to flow into the spent fuel pool? Are there remote power sources or cooling supplies that can be quickly transported to and installed at the site?*
- *In the event of a catastrophic failure at Pilgrim, is the evacuation plan adequate—and realistic—enough to safely evacuate citizens from the Emergency Planning Zones? Given the events in Japan, has Entergy, MEMA, and/or FEMA revised existing evacuation plans? Are there any plans to expand the Emergency Planning Zone and relocate the evacuation center further inland beyond the current site in Taunton?*

- *Can emergency sirens be tested on a regular, predictable schedule, so that citizens can easily determine whether the signal is a test or if it is an actual emergency warning? Has an independent emergency planning organization tested the emergency siren system to ensure that it can adequately reach all residents? What other means of notification are in place?*
- *Is Pilgrim vulnerable to terrorist attack by sea or air? Can the facility withstand the impact of an airplane?*
- *In the event of a breach of security, how does Entergy's private security work with local, state, and national public safety entities? Do these groups train and run security drills jointly with one another? Are security forces trained for a full station blackout?*
- *Are independent observers allowed to monitor and evaluate mock security drills?*

Mr. Fallacara stated that Pilgrim is designed to withstand the largest earthquake ever recorded in the New England area, and the facility, he noted, has survived several hurricanes and the Blizzard of '78, when the highest recorded ocean rise in this area occurred. Tsunamis rarely happen within the Atlantic Ocean, Mr. Fallacara said, and, thus, they are not anticipated as a threat to Pilgrim.

In the event of a major power loss, Mr. Bethay explained, Pilgrim is equipped with—and trained to deploy—several emergency generators and portable equipment to connect with various water sources (including the ocean) so that the storage pool can be continuously cooled.

Mr. Bethay affirmed Entergy's belief that Pilgrim's emergency evacuation plan is both technically sophisticated and sound. The plan, which has been accepted by MEMA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA"), is expected to change as a result of significant changes to Plymouth's population and roads—e.g. The Pinehills and the new Route 44. Mr. Bethay explained that it would be premature to revise the evacuation plan based on events in Japan until there is a better understanding of what occurred. It is expected, however, that the entire nuclear industry will take heed of—and react to—the lessons learned from Fukushima, he noted.

Mr. Rothstein stated that, as a meteorologist and air quality analyst, he would not have moved to Plymouth if he thought it was unsafe. Entergy, however, can still do better, Mr. Rothstein said, and the implementation of real-time wind monitoring equipment—as recommended by the NMC in its 2006 report—is critical to the viability of a sound evacuation plan.

Paul Smith (member of the NMC) pointed out the benefits of having a number of agencies (i.e. the NRC, ASLB, FEMA, and MEMA) working on behalf of the public's safety. He encouraged citizens to attend the NMC's monthly meetings, at which committee members discuss these issues with Entergy representatives and the Town's Emergency Management Director.

In response to a question from Selectman Muratore and Chairman Hallisey, Mr. Bethay explained that it is the NRC—not the Town nor Entergy—that determines the radius of the

Emergency Planning Zone (“EPZ”) around the facility (currently set at 10 miles). The basic components of evacuation plans are uniform across the country for the sake of consistency, Mr. Bethay said, but the unique qualities—both geographical and political—of host states, counties, and towns will determine the final evacuation plan for each nuclear facility.

Mr. Bethay reported that Entergy has 113 emergency sirens distributed throughout five towns that are simultaneously tested each year in November. Entergy advertises the annual, three-minute test in the newspaper and on local radio stations, to prevent confusion and/or panic. In those instances when a test must be done as part of the repair of an individual unit, Mr. Bethay said, the test will include three repeated voice announcements of the test prior to the sounding of the siren signal. The FEMA-endorsed siren system is designed to notify the public outdoors, while media outlets on television, radio, and internet will notify the public indoors. Mr. Bethay explained that there is a circle of influence for each siren location whereby the signal must be audible at a certain decibel level.

With regard to the threat of a terrorist attack, Mr. Bethay reported that Pilgrim’s reactor housing is the most structurally resistant building within the state. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he said, Entergy has installed and implemented a number of safeguards, procedures, and pieces of equipment to ensure that Pilgrim is the most protected facility in Massachusetts.

Rich Grassie (member of the NMC) noted his career background and expertise in the security industry and described the three main components to the safety of any nuclear power station as: the reactor containment vessel, the spent fuel pool, and any dry cask storage of fuel rods stored outside of the protected area. Pilgrim’s containment vessel, he said, is extremely reinforced, and, thus, the likelihood of damage from impact is low. The greater concern on which the members of the NMC are focused, Mr. Grassie reported, is the safety and security of the spent fuel pool, which does not have nearly the same structural protections as the containment area. Though Entergy is known for having the finest security within the industry—and should be commended for that—the spent fuel area, in his estimation, is still vulnerable.

Mr. Bethay discussed the way in which Entergy works collaboratively with state and federal agencies to maintain safety around Pilgrim. Security representatives at Pilgrim have an outstanding relationship with the Plymouth Police Department, State Police, and the FBI, Mr. Bethay said. In the event that something occurs at Pilgrim that is beyond the control of Entergy’s security forces, Mr. Bethay affirmed that there are well-practiced protocols in place that incorporate these various forces to respond to such situations, including a full station “blackout.” Mr. Alexander added that Entergy allows independent observers, such as the Coast Guard and other national security agencies, to monitor and evaluate mock security drills at Pilgrim.

In response to an inquiry from Vice Chairman Mahoney, Mr. Fallacara informed the panel that Pilgrim was built to withstand hurricane and tornado-force winds of 130 miles per hour, although such wind levels have never been recorded here in Plymouth. Mr. Bethay indicated that the reactor structure is designed for pressure release to relieve vacuums created by hurricane or tornado related pressure. The minor damage sustained by nuclear plants in



Alabama and Virginia during recent tornado events had little to no effect upon the operations of each facility, Mr. Bethay noted.

## **GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT / LIABILITY**

- *Given the potential for long-term storage of nuclear waste at Pilgrim, what is the government's plan or position, should Entergy become unable to maintain financial responsibility for the plant?*
- *How much money has been set aside in the federal "decommissioning fund" to cover such costs? Could this funding be used for the removal of spent fuel rods from the cooling pool to either dry cask storage or a remote facility?*
- *If a catastrophic event were to occur at Pilgrim, how will the Price-Anderson Act protect the individual?*
- *If nuclear power is safe, why are there no agencies that will insure nuclear power plants?*
- *How much has Entergy contributed to towns within the Emergency Planning Zone for emergency response expenditures in 2010, and what is Entergy offering, going forward?*

Mr. Alexander stated his assessment that the federal government appears to have no clear plan for the future storage of the nation's spent nuclear waste. Pilgrim's federally-mandated decommissioning fund—a protected fund that is completely dedicated to the expenses associated with the decommissioning of Pilgrim—has reached a balance of \$645 million, he said. In some cases, Mr. Alexander said, Entergy and other owners of nuclear facilities have been forced to sue the U.S. Department of Energy for expenses related to the federal government's unfulfilled responsibilities—i.e. the provision of on-site dry cask storage, to mitigate the amount of spent fuel that remains at local facilities because the centralized, federal Yucca Mountain facility was not constructed, as promised.

Mr. Alexander explained that the Price-Anderson Act of 1957 was implemented to satisfy claims of personal property damage resulting from a nuclear accident or incident. The fund, he said, contains nearly \$13 billion, and each nuclear facility licensee must commit a specified amount towards the whole. Mr. Alexander noted that the incident at Three-Mile Island was the only event to draw funds from the Price-Anderson Act. Nuclear reactor licensees like Entergy are, in fact, insured by a private industry insurance group, Mr. Alexander said.

Mr. Bethay reported that Entergy currently distributes a cumulative total of \$1.1 million (annually) to communities within the EPZ for radiological emergency preparedness and training. Entergy conducts ongoing negotiations with emergency management departments within each EPZ community regarding allocation amounts, he said, but it would be inappropriate to discuss the details of such negotiations in public.

At the close of the question and answer portion of the meeting, Senate President Therese Murray addressed the panel and audience with a brief update on communication that both she

and Attorney General Coakley have issued to the NRC regarding the spent fuel at Pilgrim. Senate President Murray was pleased to report that the NRC will consider the storage of spent fuel within Pilgrim's license review process. In addition, she noted, she, Governor Patrick, and House Speak Robert DeLeo have submitted a list of 22 questions related to the safety of the spent fuel housed at Pilgrim to NRC officials, who have promised a quick response.

Vice Chairman Mahoney stated his belief that, in the future, the Board should allow the audience to pose questions directly to the forum panel. Chairman Hallisey acknowledged Vice Chairman Mahoney's sentiments but noted that this initial forum is simply the first of many that the Selectman can hold for the public.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

Seeing no further questions or discussion from the panel, the Board adjourned the forum at approximately 9:00 p.m.

*Recorded by Tiffany Park, Clerk to the Board of Selectmen*

*A copy of the May 10, 2011 meeting packet is on file and available for public review in the Board of Selectmen's office.*